

# EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Achievement*



*Accountability*

180 Maple Street  
East Longmeadow, MA 01028-2788

Dr. Edward W. Costa II  
Superintendent

Theresa A. Olejarz  
Business Manager

October 28, 2009

To Parents/Guardians,


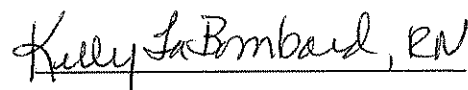
This letter is being sent to you as per our Safe School Policy. Due to the increased number of students absent in your child's classroom, with "influenza-like-illness," we feel additional information and resources may be needed to assist you in this situation.

Please refer to the "Flu Symptom Checklist for Families and Schools," on our website and " Staying Home with the Flu: Instructions for those who are sick and their close contacts," all provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, included with this letter.

Please review your child's symptoms and any household member's symptoms, each morning. Please refer to the H1N1 protocol on the back of this letter.

Please report absences from influenza-like-illnesses to your child's school so we can keep an accurate report. The school nurse may answer any further questions you may have regarding influenza-like-illness.

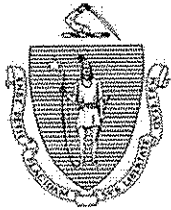
We have incorporated additional recommendations from our Local Board of Health Agent, Fred Kowal, within our schools to further address the increased absences of students such as: 1. Continuing frequent hand washing for all students and staff; 2. Sanitizing physical education mats when used in P.E. classes; 3. Sanitizing computer keyboards each day and during open hours without students; 4. Providing hand sanitizer in reception areas for public and installing hand sanitizer stations in cafeterias for lunch line; 5. Continuing to sanitize classroom desks/furniture at the end of the day once students leave; 6. Continuing to enforce the H1N1 Protocol- to send students and staff home if sick or symptomatic; 7. Instructing parents to keep their children home if they are sick-as per directives of State Health Department (referring parents to our website for the "H1N1 Swine Flu Info for Parents.")

  
Superintendent of Schools  
Nursing Supervisor

**East Longmeadow Public Schools**  
**Epidemic / Pandemic Protocol**  
**UPDATED 10-14-09**

***SCHOOL TO STATE INFORMATION:***

- 1.) Control and Surveillance Measures for All Schools designed to help prevent the spread of flu in schools and should be followed all the time, not only during flu outbreak. "Flu Symptom Checklist" and H1N1 swine flu information for parents under District School documents on ELPS website.
- 2.) Prevention and Education: Emphasize and remind student/staff about proper hand washing and cough etiquette in preventing the spread of diseases. Demonstrate and teach these measures whenever possible.
- 3.) Employee observes student or staff with symptomatic conditions.
- 4.) Student or staff is sent to the school nurse. If there are no confirmation of symptoms, the student/staff may return to class/work.
- 5.) Discovery of Symptoms: Flu-like illness consists of fever of 100.4 or greater with cough and/or sore throat. Additional symptoms include: runny nose, stuffy nose, headache, body aches, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.  
\*\*\*If symptoms are confirmed by the nurse, continue protocol:
- 6.) Any individual who the nurse identifies as a suspected, probable or confirmed case of the flu shall be excluded from school/work for at least 24 hrs after he or she is free of fever without the use of fever reducing medication such as Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen; usually 3 to 5 days in most cases. Commissioner of DPH ordered these exclusion requirements for schools/work dated 8-27-09.
- 7.) School nurse notifies school building principal of confirmation of symptoms.  
Principal will report cases to Superintendent and Transportation Manager (if student is a bus student-include bus number). Also see number 10.
- 8.) Parents/guardians are notified to pick up student immediately. Keep individual in a separate room, or area, if possible, until they can be dismissed to parent. If coughing, apply surgical mask to student, if available. Distribute the "Flu Symptom Checklist" to parent/guardian. Encourage them to contact pediatrician to report symptoms.
- 9.) School nurses will keep track of students excluded due to flu-like symptoms-so potential outbreaks can be identified quickly. Clusters of cases will be reported to Nursing Supervisor who will report to Superintendent immediately. This information will be shared with school physician and Local Board of Health Agent.
- 10.) If student rides the bus, the **Transportation Manager will inform the bus driver** and no transportation will be provided until further notice.
- 11.) Student's teachers will be informed by **the Principal** of temporary Medical exclusion.
- 12.) Students/staff excluded due to illness will be encouraged to avoid public gatherings and not allowed to attend activities on campus.
- 13.) School Nurse must assess child/staff upon returning to school/work. If fever of 100.4 or greater persists, the child/staff must be dismissed to parent for an additional 24 hrs without fever without the use of fever reducing medication.
- 14.) Once the nurse determines child/staff may return to class/work, **the Principal** will notify teachers and transportation; bus transportation may be resumed.
- 15.) Superintendent maintains communications with Nursing Supervisor/Local Board of Health Agent/School Physician.
- 16.) Routine cleaning is sufficient. Disinfectant products will be used on hard, nonporous surfaces such as door knobs, handles, tables, floors, etc.



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*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
*Department of Public Health*  
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Updated August 25, 2009

**Staying Home with the Flu: Instructions for Those  
Who Are Sick and Their Close Contacts**

Dear Flu Sufferer,

You are suspected of having flu or have been diagnosed with flu. To help prevent the spread of flu virus to others, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is asking you to **stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication.** Fever-reducing medications include acetaminophen (like Tylenol or a store name) and ibuprofen (like Advil or Motrin or a store name). For most people this will mean staying at home for about four days, but it could be longer.

During the period that you have symptoms, especially fever, it is possible for you to spread flu to those who have close contact with you (for example, to someone living with or caring for you). Flu can be spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible to become infected by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus, and then touching your own nose or mouth.

To prevent the spread of flu while you are sick, please follow these guidelines:

**YOU SHOULD:**

- **ALWAYS** cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose (or cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow). Never cough in the direction of someone else. Throw out your used tissues with your regular garbage.
- **ALWAYS** wash your hands with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rubs after coughing or sneezing and after throwing used tissues in the garbage.
- **Limit contact with others;** avoid close contact. People you live with should limit contact with you. They should not touch their nose, face or eyes after contact with you without washing their hands or using an alcohol-based rub. If possible, make one person (not someone who is pregnant) the main person who will care for you while you're sick. If possible, stay in a room separate from other people in the house.
- Clean all recently contaminated surfaces such as bedside tables, bathroom surfaces, doorknobs, and children's toys with a regular household cleaner. The person doing the cleaning should wash their hands after cleaning the area. Dirty dishes and eating utensils should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- Laundry can be washed in a regular washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. Linens and towels should also be tumble dried on a hot setting if possible. It is not necessary to separate your laundry from other laundry.
- Stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin or a store brand).

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS (People living with or caring for someone with flu):**

- **Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently, and after every time you come in contact with the sick person.**
- Limit contact with the sick person; Limit contact with the sick person, especially while they have a fever and are coughing and sneezing.
- Watch yourself closely for flu-like symptoms (fever and cough or sore throat) for 7 days after your last contact with the sick person. If you get sick with fever, cough, or sore throat, stay at home and follow the guidelines listed on page one.
- Sick people should not have visitors while they are sick with flu or a flu-like illness. If other people must enter the home, they should avoid contact with the sick person.
- If you are washing the bed sheets and towels for the sick person, you should use regular laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting if possible. Avoid holding laundry close to your body when you are carrying it, and clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after handling dirty laundry.

## **IF I AM SICK WITH THE FLU DO I NEED TO TAKE SPECIAL MEDICINE?**

You should only take prescription medicine if your doctor prescribes it for you. For people with some medical conditions, either Tamiflu™ or Relenza™ may be recommended. Ask your doctor to see if you need prescription medicine. You should also rest, drink plenty of liquids, and take the medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol or store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or store brand).

**People who are under 18 years of age should NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing products. This can cause a rare serious illness called Reye Syndrome in young people with the flu.**

## **WHAT ARE FEVER-REDUCING MEDICATIONS AND WHEN SHOULD I STOP TAKING THEM?**

Fever-reducing medications are ones that contain acetaminophen (Tylenol or store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or store brand). These medicines can be given to people who are sick with flu to help bring their fever down and relieve their pain. As you begin to feel better you will probably not need fever-reducing medicines and will stop taking them. You should stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after the last dose of fever-reducing medication.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY SYMPTOMS GET WORSE?**

If your symptoms get worse, especially if you begin to have trouble breathing, you should call your doctor or seek help at an emergency room. When going to the doctor's office or the emergency room, you should avoid taking public transportation (subway or bus) if possible.

If you go to your doctor, please contact the doctor's office before you leave home and tell them you have flu-like symptoms. When you arrive at the doctor's office, go straight to the receptionist or nurse so that you can be put in a private room while you wait. You may be asked to wear a mask and you should sit away from others as much as possible. If you call an ambulance, let the operator know that you have flu-like symptoms, and also let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.

## **SHOULD PEOPLE I LIVE WITH TAKE MEDICINE TO PREVENT FLU?**

DPH recommends preventive medication for household or other close contacts who have health conditions that may put them at risk for more severe illness. To find out whether preventive medication, such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is recommended, talk to your doctor.

## **WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION**

Talk to your doctor; call 211; or visit the following websites that have information about flu: [www.mass.gov/dph/flu](http://www.mass.gov/dph/flu) and [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Especially recommended is the DPH booklet "Flu What You Can Do: Caring for People at Home" available in nine languages.